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Informant Tells of Effort to 'Destabilize' U.S.

Cuba Tied to Colombia Drug Smugglers

By RONALD J. OSTROW, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—Senate investigators said Wednesday that they have developed information that Cuba is involved in the mounting flow of marijuana and cocaine from Colombia into the United States in hopes of unsettling the U.S. government.

The information, supplied chiefly by an informant now in jail in Florida, involves Colombian "mother ships" that transfer their cargoes of illicit narcotics in Cuban waters to small craft from Florida and the Bahamas.

The investigators said that Sergio Pinon and Danny Benitez, special agents of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, will testify today on the Cuban role before the Senate Judiciary subcommittee on terrorism.

Pinon and Benitez will report on the informant's testimony that he took part in recent offloading of marijuana near Cayo Blanco.

According to informed sources, the informant, who was interviewed by subcommittee investigators, also says that two Cuban intelligence officers told him the operation had the approval of Cuban au-

thorities who hoped the drugs would help to "destabilize" the United States.

Investigators would not identify the informant on grounds that disclosure of his name could lead to his death.

Miguel Martinez, spokesman for the Cuban Interest section in Washington, said Fidel Castro's Foreign Ministry "had strongly" denied earlier reports that Cuba was involved in smuggling drugs into the United States.

He said there would be "no official reaction" to the Senate investigators' reports but contended that Cuba had taken stronger action against drug smuggling than other Caribbean nations.

Investigators for the Senate subcommittee, which is headed by Sen. Jeremiah Denton (R-Ala.), regard the informant's story as corroborative of earlier information that a Colombian drug smuggler had arranged for Cuban aid in smuggling marijuana into the United States.

The Colombian, Jaime Guillot-Lara, is now in the custody of Mexican authorities on contraband charges. He allegedly funneled Cu-

ban arms and money to a Colombian leftist group, M-19, in return for Cuban aid in helping to bring Colombian marijuana into the United States.

According to information supplied to the subcommittee by the Florida state agents, Colombia "mother ships" run up a Cuban flag when they come within 17 miles of the island. Cuban coast guard ships then take the Colombia craft farther into Cuban waters after throwing them a tow line.

The "mother ships" then unload narcotics onto a large, powered barge, and smaller craft from Florida and the Bahamas tie up on the other side of the barge and take on the cargo.

Colombia supplies 80% of the marijuana used by Americans, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration. A DEA spokesman said his agency had developed no information on the Cuban role.

However, other intelligence sources said the Central Intelligence Agency was circulating two documents within government circles on the alleged Cuban involvement.